1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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565 554 *Etsu*), and 14 to the house of Umaru, the present ruling house. The death of a high rank-holder and the subsequent appointment of a successor is frequently made an occasion for a far-reaching reshuffle of ranks, called in Nupe *wiruwiru*. It goes hand in hand with a large-scale exchange of houses, younger brothers or sons moving into the vacated house of their older brothers or fathers (vacated by death or promotion), for the state residence of the highest *gitsi* ranks goes with the title. Rarely would a new house be built in Bida to-day for a *wacī*, a Great One, as the members of the royal nobility are also called; 'only *talakaši*, Poor Ones', said an informant, 'must build themselves new homes.' Appointment to a first rank and promotion to a higher rank is granted by the king in council with royal princes and the other officers of state. Any able-bodied man in the Fulani families who has reached senior age and who has proved his ability and loyalty can claim to be admitted to the ranks of the titled *gitsiši*.[1] But there is no rule. Favouritism, intrigues, bribes [557] play their part in appointment and promotion. The ranks which a family can accumulate reflects its influence at the court and its favour with the ruling king. It is no accident that the royal house of the last *Etsu* (who had only just died) counts more ranks than either of the other two dynasties. Unlike the system of ranks which we found in the village these royal ranks do not leave an old man or an invalid who can no longer fulfil his duties in the possession of his office. In such a case a younger man is appointed to the rank, and the old holder is known as the 'Old *Kpotū*', or whatever the rank may be. A similar difference between the rank systems of village and state lies in that perfect health is an indispensable condition of appointments to any state rank. Deformity, even of the slightest kind, is ruled out. The younger brother of one of the [732] Emirs of Bida, who had a withered arm, was unable to obtain any title at all. In the state system of ranks, which was based on service in the war [555] and on offices vital to the safety of the state, respect for old age or consideration for even minor disablements has no place.

The investiture—it is the same for royal princes and for officers of state—is an interesting ceremony, an impressive proclamation of the main facts on which the feudal kingdom is built: social promotion, the oath of fealty and loyalty and responsibility towards king and country. A propitious day for the investiture is first fixed by Mallams or diviners. Then follows the invitation to the ceremony—gifts of kola-nuts sent by the candidate to all men of rank and standing. Drummers in the house of the *Etsu* announce the beginning of the ceremony; all rank-holders are assembled in the *Etsu*'s house. He addresses the candidate ceremonially, proclaiming three times his appointment. The *Alkali* (or *Limani*), as representative of the clergy of the kingdom, clothes the candidate in an embroidered gown and rich cloak—gifts of the *Etsu*—and places a turban on his head. Then he leads the prayer, and the *Etsu* addresses a final exhortation to the new officer of state: 'Practice for-

[1] The Nupe of Patigi have preserved a linguistic distinction which has disappeared in Bida, namely, between royal princes who have received titles and those who have not. The former are called *b'rama* (their traditional salute is *krama*, i.e. behold the *rama*), and the latter *gitsiši*.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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of the kind known as *nnákata* (lit. 'mother-of-the-house'), which is best described as that of a patroness and her protégé. Influential and wealthy older women frequently patronize younger men in this fashion, occasionally sending them gifts of food and drink, inviting them to their houses, and helping them in various ways. Ketswamasa, who was the best potter of the village and a rich and clever woman, was in a position to offer this patronage, and probably cultivated the friendship of the young chief-to-be for a particular reason; for it was generally assumed that she hoped to become *Sagi* when Braima succeeded to the chieftainship. There was no suspicion at the time that Ketswamasa was a witch.

Late one evening in November 1935 Braima was drinking beer in his uncle's house with Ketswamasa's husband. After the latter had left, Braima's wife saw her own husband walk out of the house in the direction of the nearby river, presumably, she thought, to relieve nature. From this walk in the dark Braima never returned but simply disappeared, none of the neighbours having seen him. The wife grew terribly excited, wept and screamed, and accused Ketswamasa of having bewitched her husband. She was not at once believed, though the people were certain that Braima had not fallen into the river or met with some other accident. The chief, greatly worried, went for advice and help, first to the missionary at Mokwa, then to the *Alkali* of Mokwa, and finally travelled to Bida to tell the *Etsu* about the mysterious disappearance of his nephew. The *Etsu* apparently only expressed the pious wish 'May God help' and advised the chief to be patient. So the old man returned to his village, waited for three months, and finally performed the usual burial service for people whose bodies cannot be found. By then everyone was convinced, especially the women, led by Braima's widow and the then *Sagi*, that Braima had been bewitched and that Ketswamasa was the culprit. Her husband drove her out, without formal divorce, and she went to live with her brother's family. There she was living when I visited Kpatsuwa, friendless and so feared that my informants refused to take me to her house in the dark (though they did so willingly in daytime).

The Jebba informant had the names all wrong, calling the witch Zena and her victim Jiya. I discovered later that these were the names of persons involved in a different witchcraft case, said to have happened several years ago in some other riverain village; quite probably other details of that story have equally merged with the report on the Kpatsuwa happenings, which would be a familiar feature of myth-making. According to the Jebba version Braima (to call him by his true name) suddenly disappeared in the middle of day, while his wife was busy cooking; she saw him go

an outfit for their daughter, pots and pans, mats, etc. A rich man gives something under £4, and spends perhaps as much as £9 or £10 on cloths. If he is unable to raise all this money at once an arrangement can be made in the Alkali's Court, by which he is bound over to make up the deficit within a given time, and so long always as he gives his wife 1,250 cowries, value 6d., for her first chop money, they may marry at once.

The dowry is sometimes remitted in cases where the father-in-law can afford to support the young couple, or a man may marry his first cousin without payment. Where no dower is given the marriage is known as "salaka."

Girls do not marry as a rule before they are sixteen or seventeen and often not till they are twenty, men when they are eighteen or twenty, or later, according to their wealth. The customs of the aboriginal pagan Nupe* differ slightly. The betrothal being arranged by the heads of the respective families, and when it is agreed upon, the boy's guardian assembles the whole family and names the bride in their presence and in that of the prospective groom. All presents are given through the guardian, whom the suitor accompanies on his visits to the bride's people, but he does not see the bride herself. A week before the marriage is consummated both parties remain in their houses, the groom to receive the salutations of his friends, the bride to stain her hands and feet with henna, and to powder her face and body with camwood. On the wedding day the suitor's friends escort him to the hut of his betrothed, where they talk, but she sits silent until the groom gives her presents, which is a signal for the departure of his friends. When the groom emerges he proclaims whether or not he has found his bride chaste. A feast follows, and the groom is escorted back to his house by his friends, where he is followed later by his bride, who is attended by women carrying her outfit. The couple live together in one hut until she conceives, when her husband builds himself another house.

The wedding festivities for a virgin are carried on for a week, day and night. For the first three days they take place in her own people's house, and on the fourth day she goes to her husband's house, where the feasting continues for another four days and four nights. Seven days of seclusion follow, when neither man nor wife may be seen, and after this he is allowed the full honours of a husband. The bride, however, may not go out till three months have elapsed.

The ceremony is of a very much humbler description for a second marriage.

In the Gurara District of Nupe (Lapai Emirate), a curious custom exists, which, with minor modifications is practised

* Sapke and Mokwa. The differences only have been mentioned, not the similarities.

as far east as Awtun (Ekiti), and from Yagba District to Ilorin. *"A wealthy woman trader would sometimes go through the form of marriage with one or more young women—reputed virgins. These 'wives' she would send out to various neighbouring villages, ostensibly trading. When, in the expected course of events, these 'wives' formed illicit attachments, a careful note was made of the resultant progeny. When the children had reached five or six years, or more, they were claimed by the woman 'husband' as her children, based on the legal fiction of all legal wives' children being the children of the legal 'father.' In almost every case, the real father compounded with the legal 'father,' in the customary value of the child. The profit to the woman capitalist was exceedingly great.

"This custom is not confined to the pagan, nor to the female sex. Many a reputed Mussulman (Bida-Pategi) will allow his wife to go on three and four years' trading expeditions, fully cognisant of the inevitable results. In due time he will apply for the custody of the children, which are legally his until his wife has sued for and obtained a legal divorce, which last is seldom done, owing (in Nupe and Ilorin generally) to the high 'dowry' money claimed. If the case is settled out of Court, the husband enjoys substantial profits. On the other hand, if the wife and children return to him, which is seldom nowadays, he can always obtain a respectable 'dower' from the suitors to the girl children. As to the boys, he finds every use for them on his farm."

The first wife is the head one, and advises the other women on all household and commercial matters, and they have to apply to her for permission to leave the compound. Each wife has her own hut, but all the women have their meals together, when they sit round the pot in a circle, in strict order of precedence, counting from the right hand of the first wife. Next her is the second wife, next her the third wife, next her the fourth wife, then come their daughters and foster-daughters in order of age, dependants and slaves. The first wife helps herself and passes the pot round the table, hands only being used—she alone may sit upright, while the others are obliged to crouch in her presence.

There are three meals in the day, at 7 a.m, mid-day, and sun-down, each meal consisting of one dish only. For breakfast they have "fura," a sort of porridge, with cow's milk where it is obtainable, (The Nupe will not drink goat's milk, though they eat its flesh.) At noon the poorer people have porridge again, the well-to-do have guinea-corn, or rice, mixed with soup. Supper is the principal meal, when soup is made with guinea-corn or rice, and any meat or fish that may be available.

* Mr. E. C. Dufi.